

Acknowledgments

Front cover: **Blue Eyes**, ink and pastel paper. David Besteman, Senior

Art selection/Photographs of selections. Dana Freeman

Manuscript selection: Danielle Alexander, Sarah Branz, Shelby Denhof, Sarah Ewing, Stephanie Giluk, Chelsea Graham, Jarrod Irwin, Erin Lodes, Ken Logan, Katie McKay, Neal Steichen

Faculty: Professor Brent Chesley, Professor Gary Eberle, Associate Professor Vicki McMillan, Adjunct Instructor Lynnea Page-Jenkins

LIT officers: Danielle Alexander, Sarah Branz, Jarrod Irwin, and Erin Lodes

Final Judge for the Academy of American Poets University and College Poetry Prize

Keith Taylor

Preliminary Judges for the contest

Associate Professor Vicki McMillan
and Adjunct Instructor Lynnea Page-Jenkins

Sampler XXV coordination

Associate Professor Pamela Dail Whiting, Professor Gary Eberle

Organizing assistant

Stephanie Giluk (LIT member)

Sampler XXV layout and design

Philip Mitri and Marah Klose
*with assistance of LIT officers: Danielle Alexander,
Sarah Branz, Jarrod Irwin, and Erin Lodes*

Funding

Admissions, Art and English Departments, Student Senate

SAMPLER Twenty-Five

A compilation of writing and visual art by Aquinas College students.
(Grand Rapids, Michigan), Spring 2013

Contributors

Artists

David Besteman, Elizabeth Erickson, Chelsea Lanning, Elizabeth Maxian, Mary Reyna, Thomas Smith, Courtney VanderLugt

Writers

Danielle Alexander, Elisira Auchter, Robert Bennett, Sarah Branz, Emily Clements, Paris Close, Ben DeGarmo, Debra Duiven, Anna Egres, Elizabeth Erickson, Tiffany Fluker, Hannah Fowler, Stephanie Giluk, Karen Heeringa, Regan Levitte, Erin Lilly, Erin Lodes, Ken Logan, Rebecca Malmquist, Anna Matthews, Jessie McCormick, Elizabeth Nelson, Carly Plank, Jacob Sabourin, Aimee Shemanski, Taryn Steasick, Benjamin Stover, Neal Steichen, Rachael Steil, Monika Stutzman, Raven Tolliver, Josh Veal, Jenna VanderWeyden, Stephen Douglas Wright

This SAMPLER is dedicated to Miriam Pederson

Miriam Pederson, recently retired Professor of English at Aquinas College, served as manager and co-manager of SAMPLER as well as advisor for Lambda Iota Tau for 18 years. She earned an MFA degree in Creative Writing from Western Michigan University in 1984 and taught at the College for 29 years.

Her chapbook, *This Brief Light*, was published in 2003 by Finishing Line Press and her poetry has been published in many anthologies, journals, and small press magazines including *New Poems from the Third Coast: Contemporary Michigan Poetry* (anthology), *The MacGuffin*, *Passages North*, *The Book of Birth Poetry* (anthology), *Christianity and Literature*, *Sing Heavenly Muse*, and *Song of the Owastanong: Grand Rapids Poetry in the 21st Century* (forthcoming).

Pederson's poems in collaboration with sculpture created by her husband, Ron Pederson, are exhibited in area and regional galleries, at ArtPrize venues, and documented in three collections of collaborative images and poems: *The Adding We Do in Our Sleep*, *Doubletake*, and *Evidence of Things Unseen*.

The Spinner

Dusty light filters through the garage window
and my index fingers burn
as they pinch a fat spool of fishing line
like a five cent Chinese finger trap.

Across the garage, the thinning wheel collects
onto a fishing pole, my father quickly reeling it in,
stretching it to the other side of the aluminum boat
that sleeps in its trailer hammock.

The line slackens and tangles
as my arms tire and lower an inch.
He fumbles with the swinging loops
and instructs me again to hold the line taut.

His gruff patience
is that of a spinner at her wheel
who, day after day,
eases tufts of fiber into thin order,
trapping them into spools—

dense spools that will someday unravel
as she wraps her grandson in a blanket and says,
think of the patience it took.

WINNING POEM OF THE
ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POETRY PRIZE
The Spinner by Sarah Branz, Senior

The final judge for the contest was Keith Taylor who has published fourteen collections of poems and short stories, co-edited and co-translated volumes. His work has appeared widely in journals, magazines, on-line sites, and in newspapers in North America and Europe, as well as in many anthologies. He has received Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs. He teaches at the University of Michigan, where he directs the Bear River Writers' Conference and works as Associate Editor of Michigan Quarterly Review.

Keith Taylor's Comments:

It was good to see the students at Aquinas doing a lot of the experiments that are roiling the scene of contemporary American poetry. In these poems there is a comfort with the artifacts of our popular culture, sometimes a strong sense of rhythm, sometimes a real playfulness and joy in the ordering of the words. It is interesting that the two I picked, the two I thought the most successful efforts at combining their sounds and their subjects, both dealt with family tensions, subdued, a bit hidden, shaped by love but insistent on individual distinction.

Finally, I think "The Spinner" is the most effective of this good group of poems. The poet uses the metaphor easily and without didacticism, uses it to create an emotional whole that is unexpected and more than a little frightening. The poem begins in one emotional register but then is turned somewhere else, somewhere more complicated, by the metaphor at the end. I also thought this poet's use of the line was accomplished. The lines are clean and strong and make sense. Lines and stanzas help the reader move through the poem.

My honorable mention would go to "Mother." The title sets us up for something, perhaps an expected or sentimental portrayal. But then, of course, the poem adds much more tension to that expected moment, and the tension is interesting. The poet can admit love and value the learning from the parent even while saying "I am drowning." Two different symbols -- thimble and rabbit -- work very well in the poem to situate the emotion in a larger context, both illuminating the personal and connecting it to the larger world. The ability with those bodes well for future work.

HONORABLE MENTION
The Academy of American Poets
Contest for Colleges and Universities

Mother

1.

A thimble fits on my thumb,
and I should feel safe. This is the way
we are taught at age five or six or twelve;
as if things meant to protect us
will really do their job—
will really keep us safe.

2.

I am drowning. A cold black
fog from God is pulling me
and I am listening to it and thinking
no, not yet and this is when you pull me
up with a great shout, when you clutch me
to your chest and whisper what were you
doing, what were you doing, what were
you
doing?

3.

You teach me to knit because you want to
be a good mother and I knit during class
because I want to be a good listener
and I don't know how because you were
such a good mother that you never told me
that my voice isn't the most important thing
in the world.

(continued)

4.

Jackrabbits are indigenous to where we're from, they are natives, land dwellers; they have a place they belong to, and that place is the earth, the ground, the long grass where I used to run and pretend that I belonged.

5.

At twenty-one I should know how to count, how to tell left from right, right from left but I find myself hesitating, even now --- faltering, wanting, needing, and not finding, drowning in the way things are knit together, wondering who invented the thimble, and who told the jack rabbit it had to run.

- Danielle Alexander, Senior



Woman Deer Overlay, photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

from Mouse

by Anna Matthews, Senior

It was a significant summer by its record. First, spring flooded the farmland around my house and a new patchwork of lakes and ponds appeared. The ditches overflowed and then began to smell with a muddy tang, like yogurt gone off. Ducks landed and moved into the fields instead of flying over them. The mosquitoes bred, and then bred again until not even a combination of bonfire and cigar smoke could keep them away at night. But as summer matured out of too fecund spring, the increasing heat wore away the smell of stagnant water.

I remember that time as "the summer when the weather was dry and I was dry too." An emotional husk, or least on the way to becoming one. Leftover from last fall's harvest, a gray stalk trembling among one million green shoots. My blood flowed fast, but gave no warmth to fill me up. Meaty life had gone.

Chose not to see anyone that summer.

Did not get together with any friends.

Ignored invitations till they stopped offering.

I left the house only to go to the library or when my parents forced me to go to Mass. Communion wafers sucked up all the spare moisture left on my tongue. My sole company was the relentless echo of beats in my chest that would not go away, no matter how I tried not to notice. My heart felt so near the surface of my skin I was afraid that if I saw a friend it would burst through—its pressure increased so quickly at the thought of interacting with other people.

That summer I spent a lot of time walking, alone. I was nervous, simply nervous, all the time. I went down the dirt road several times a day. It was calming. I watched my favorite flowers bloom in the ditches between the fields and road—the Queen Anne's Lace that has a scent like water has a taste (none, but there is still something there), the wildly curling baby fists of sweet peas, and tiger lilies like brush fire. In the mornings, I saw chicory flowers open. By noon, the blue sky had closed them. Walks were carefully planned so that no cars would pass me, ostensibly because I wanted to avoid sticky clay dust. Often, though, a car came rumbling down the road at me, dust clouding behind. The car was a personal affront. I was angry, or I thought I was, feeling inside a heat hotter than the sun that splotted freckles on my shoulders. What was the car doing? It's not supposed to be here. It's not the right time for cars! Already sweaty from the exercise, I was doubly so by the time the car passed. My blood pumped so fast that as the car went by, my heart burst. Blood slid out of my pores—a deep blush at my irrationally upset state. Mouse of a heart, I mocked myself. It beats fast. A delicate and nervous muscle.

That same summer I had a dream.

The room was dark and warm; I was curled up on something padded. A mattress, maybe. Every facial muscle twisted in revulsion and horror. With one powerful hand something held me captive. The other hand held a mouse, its belly slit. Pink froth in a tiny, gray, exquisitely soft body. One bite, I thought,

and then I'll kill the thing keeping me here. The gray fur was dry, and the innards slippery and lukewarm. Just swallow, no chewing. The tail was difficult to get down. I couldn't swallow it in one go even though it seemed thin and insubstantial.

I woke up, overheated. Air came from the corner vent, the furnace was on.

Once you find anxiety's edge, you walk it for a long time. If you can't master anxiety, at least master the edge. When I was quite little, in the middle of summer a mouse died in a dresser drawer of mine. The rotting smell sat in the air for a week while I tried and failed to find the source. After that, any especially hot day revived the odor. Cleaning out the drawer that fall, a desiccated mouse tumbled out of the folds of a pink cotton nightgown that used to be my mother's.

My edge is now like this: one sleepless night can set off three more of lying in the dark, being afraid of not sleeping. If I have to go to the grocery store or meet friends at a party my blood will not rush into an implosive heat, although sweat might pour from my underarms. Oh, how silly, I sigh. The edge resurfaces out of nowhere on a flat run of ground.

Cultivate a catlike balance and fall onto feet at worst.

Digest mouse in own time.

Usually sleeplessness lasts just one more night. Besides, I haven't dreamt of mice in a long time.



Jar, oil on canvas
Thomas Smith, BFA Senior



Summer

an assemblage poem

Untitled 1, oil on canvas
Thomas Smith, BFA Senior

It has been a countless time
since the land had last been found;
the people are losing hope.

In an effort to find it,
potions were concocted,
bottled up, hoarded,
through the endless winter.
The scribe has recorded
all the half-remembered dreams:

wild horses conjuring dust storms with pounding hooves,
seagulls intoxicated by salty ocean spray,
gawky teens wandering with clasped hands
down an aged street beneath a blue sky.

How we forget, the scribe thinks,
the time before love had crept from our lives
as the sun had slid from the sky.

The land has been ruthless in its absence,
yielding nothing but cold dark days
that leave the people missing.

- Chelsea Graham, Senior and Erin Lodes, Senior

The Graveyard Shift at Seven Eleven

Come nigh my bonny cherry slushy sipping goddess
I spy from high above my Gawain perch at the counter,
Behind the Super Big Gulp cups and Ferris wheel of frankfurters
Gum snapping, lips pouting, maraschino smile & pigtails
My dark angel of convenience
I will protect you my sweet
From mumbling brownbag toting drunkards
and video game playing perverts
from 40 ounce beer buying wolves with razor stubble faces
and hot pocket hungry grinches
No shoplifting surly teens
nor grab-assing beasts can touch you
and none can besmirch the sheer perfection that is you
Bottle returning scroungers, begone, for she is mine
And in my twenty four hours, it is only these five minutes of possession
that complete my existence.

- *Debra Duiven, Senior*



Nicholas, charcoal on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior

Ejected

Jacob Sabourin, Senior

I peeked just barely over the edge of my glove, sniffing little particles of leather into my nose. I flared my eyes at the boy in the batter's box.

Up in the bleachers, the other parents were sitting and chatting about their daily lives, but there he was, standing in the back alone, fidgeting nervously in a navy jumpsuit and a brand new Detroit Tigers cap with the brim unbent. He looked like he wanted to rush out on the field and start hurling balls at the kid himself. A big proud grin spread across his face. He gave me a thumbs-up.

Back to the kid in the box. My eyes met his and I saw they were a mildly frosty blue, just barely colored, like two little round icicle bull's-eyes. He cocked his banged-up Copperhead aluminum bat back behind his ears, which had reddened in the bitterness of the morning. He gripped the worn out handle that probably his entire team had been swinging around all season. These were a rag-tag bunch of chumps. Not like me. No, I was carved by a rigorous workout schedule, a highly optimized machine, a peregrine falcon on a field of ducks. Or so I'd been told.

I cycled through my choices. Fast, change, curve, slurve, slider, knuckle, knuckle-curve, whatever. I quit debating, leaned back and chucked a bullet at the plate. It caromed off his head. His helmet ricocheted violently into the backstop, clanging against the chain links and falling to the ground, lying limp beside the darkened icicle caves from which it was borne.

I looked up to my father in the bleachers. He stood in the far back corner facing the right field foul pole, his arms crossed, cigarette smoke curling up from between his fingers. My shoulders sagged. Even as the duck lay slaughtered, it still wasn't enough.

I stood glaring at the plate, watching the fog spew from deep within my lungs. I'd made a mistake, but I couldn't show anything but coldness, or they'd think I was rattled. You can't ever get rattled on the mound. They'll see your weakness. They won't fear you anymore. They'll shake the chain links and shout and scream and you won't be able to shut them up. They'll rise up and they'll rally and you'll lose all your power over them.

The umpire escorted me off the field. The stares of dozens of parents, now standing, spread a layer of frost on the back of my neck. I stepped into the passenger's seat of my dad's silver Chevy Z-71 and we drove away. He lit a cigarette, rolled down the window, and sighed.

Home

Elizabeth Nelson, Sophomore

From my window on the second story, I can see my little silver Toyota across the soccer field in the parking lot, strategically placed to the left of a group of tall trees so that I can keep an eye on it. Last night's frost glows in the sunlight on the hood, and there are no tickets tucked under the windshield wiper. I am relieved that it appears to be in one piece, though I have neglected it for weeks. It reminds me that this week can't last forever. When Friday rolls around, there will be no homework to do, no appointments to keep. All I will have to do is drive.

Eventually, the week does end, as it always has. I gather my backpack, my purse, my computer, and my laundry and shuffle to my car. I walk a bit lopsided under the weight of it all, but I'm unwilling to return for another load. I want to go home.

I reach the door and unlock it. An achy squeak escapes as it opens, but it remains faithfully hinged. When I throw my belongings into the back seat with a huff of breathlessness, the car doesn't groan in protest of the extra burden. It humors me good-naturedly. Its hood is pocked with the rusty age spots, caused by long and brutal Michigan winters, but it still trudges along through the snow without complaint. Its front bumper bears the scars of a fight with a fence, but it has always kept its driver safe and snug. It is my good and faithful travelling companion.

I climb inside, and the warm, gray seats welcome me with a surprising degree of warmth, given the frigid weather. I click my seatbelt into place and glance around. Everything is as I left it. The rearview mirror points back behind me, the right side tipped ever-so-slightly higher than the left. The heat controller with the missing handle is set directly in the middle of the red bar – hot, but not too hot. The seat is the perfect distance from the pedals. I test the brake out of habit, but it's well within my reach as always.

The key, cold and square in my hand, coaxes the fourteen-year-old engine to life like magic. In the familiar growl of the engine, I find more peace than silence knows. "Let's get out of here," I tell it, pulling back the shifter until the little green "D" light appears. We're ready to go. The engine rumbles and drowns out the sound of my off-key singing voice as we pull out of the parking lot.

Traffic is terrible this time of the day, but it suits us perfectly - we weave in and out among the other cars, a single silver grain of sand on the beach, virtually undetectable in a sea of anonymous vehicles headed west. The whirl of tires gripping the road lulls everyone into a trance. I can almost hear the chanting: must go home, must go home, must go home. They'll never learn to enjoy where they are. My car is the only one with wings.

My mother always asks me what time I'll be home, and I always lie and say, "A little after five." She'll never know it, but the truth is that I'm home long before that. The truth is that I don't need a house to be home. I'm at home in anonymity and solitude. I'm at home in ordinariness and familiarity. I'm at home with my hands on the wheel, finally in control of something. I'm at home in my car.

Sibling Rivalry

My father gave me a coat once
when all I wanted was a nickname.

There was nothing special about it,
just a drab tan affair;

you know the kind—big, bulky
and full of brass rivets,

the kind construction workers or mechanics wear
in the embrace of winter—

usually named Carhartt.
Mine was a Walls, Twelve-Over-Eight.

It didn't quite fit;
neither did my brother's nickname.

But, through the eyes of a child
with a father sterner than steel,

I took it, as his way of saying
I love you.

- *Ken Logan, Senior*



Photogram, silver gelatin print
Elizabeth Erickson, Senior

Dandelion

in memory of my beloved dog Tasha

Like a flower, she folds herself during wintertime,
abandoning her hay-bed. Gently crawling
beneath the warmth of spring.

Like a flower, she folds herself during wintertime,
the dandelion secretly pawing
through her white grave.

Like a flower, she folds herself during wintertime,
abandoning her hay-bed. Gently crawling

- Paris Close, Junior

Absence

A turtle in its shell,
I am without you.
A turtle in a dark little hole -
The abyss of your absence.
Did you put me here?
Or did I crawl here on my own?
I am frightened
Of my own fear and loneliness;
Of anything that walks faster than my reluctant plod.
Let me climb out on your bent back.
Your return is release
For me,
Entrapment for you.

- *Monika Stutzman, Sophomore*

I unfurl my conscience on the sand,

the wind beats it flat, gray, and fatigued.
The swell peels off shoreline rocks,
the gloss of streaming water
a sheet settling over a bed.
At the sea's headboard
I snap out my wrinkles,
hands like gulls in the wind.
I count the bumps of the stones
one-by-one blotching
my conscience with damp and salt.
A stony sea, curious, regards me.
Waves rush my feet
and tug away my conscience,
sheet enfolded to sea.

- *Anna Matthews, Senior*



Class 5, charcoal and conté on paper
Elizabeth Maxian, Senior

The Truth

Erin Lodes, Senior

She could not fathom what would have brought him here, here to her small cottage by the sea, so far away from the city streets he loved. She looked at his windswept hair, wondering if it would have collected salt from the ocean air, if she could find the individual crystals and separate them from the strands, the way she had painstakingly separated herself from him.

"How is your mother? Is her arthritis still getting worse?" she asked, going back to kneading the dough for bread she was making.

He sighed, and she felt him in this room in a way she had forgotten. How overwhelming the height of his body and the breadth of his shoulders could be, how his body always seemed too large for the space they occupied together. "She's doing alright. Arthritis is still bad but she's on these new meds that seem to be helping."

"Well that's good. You'll tell her I say hello?" She didn't look up but she felt him nod.

There were long moments of silence that followed, and she focused on her fingers molding, pushing and pulling. "Chris..." he said and her hands stilled. It had been so long since anyone had said her name that way. When she didn't turn around he ran a large hand through his hair. "Chris, what happened?" She stiffened; he had come for answers.

"I left." They are two small words that hide more truth than they reveal, and her answer cuts him because he knows it already. It is a wound already inflicted, a knife already stuck into his side, and she has just pulled it out, the handle the top of the "l" and the tip the sharp bottom of the "t" that ended it all. I left. Fresh pain rushes in the hole that she has opened to the air, both of them hear it in his sharp intake of breath.

Turning to him, her hands, covered in flour, reach as if to apply pressure. "I'm sorry." She stops before she touches him, not knowing if either of them could handle the contact.

He collapses down into the heavy wooden chair and leans on the old oak table, his head in his hands. "Just tell me why."

"I told you why." And even as she says it she senses the half truths laced into the words.

"Again," he breathes out.

"I don't belong there."

"Yes you do," he protests, his hands gesturing as if they might cut the air between them. "You were fine in the city, you made friends, you loved the bookstore around the corner, the garden you made on our roof." He hesitates, looking out the window to find courage or truth there. "You loved me." The whispered words are torn from his lips but the ragged edge appears on her skin. She doesn't deny it, and instead looks away, out the window over the ocean. Her face is worn with sadness, pulling at her the way tides change the shoreline.

"Did I do something wrong? Didn't I-" he gets up and places himself in front of her so she has to meet his eyes. Reaching out he cups her face, running his thumb over the familiar span of her cheekbone. "Didn't I love you enough?"

"Yes! Yes of course you did! I know how much you loved me... it's all I ever wanted." Her lips are trembling and all he wants is to make them stop. "I just... I realized I wanted more."

"More? More what?" He latches onto this, sure if she can give him something to hold onto, a task or a number or an event, he can use it like a lasso to pull her back to him.

"Nothing. Not more of something... not something you can give, just... more."

His hands open and close like gates, and she remembers passing through them so many times. Leaving the world on the other side of the wall and walking through the gates into his. And she couldn't quite pinpoint the time when all she did was grip the gate like prison bars, staring back at what she'd left.

When she speaks it pours out of her: "I left because I hate the mole behind your left ear, and because I love the freckle in front of your right ear. Because you're not enough for me, because I'm not enough for you. Because I've never loved anyone and couldn't start with you no matter how badly I tried, because I fell in love with you so much it scared me and I had to run away. Because I missed who I'd been, because I didn't think I could be anything else but that, and because I knew I could... because I had to leave.

"Take your pick," she tells him.

"For Christ's sake! I hate it when you pull this shit Chris, you know that!"

She sat down at the table and etched it out on the wooden surface. She wanted to smell the sound of the ocean and touch the height of the mountains. She wanted to feel colors and see sounds. She wanted to find the truth and wrap it in a box so she could give it to him as a present with a big shiny bow and a card that said she was sorry. But she couldn't find the present, so all she could give him was the empty box and the card with an apology that felt insignificant in the absence of what was supposed to be beneath the wrapping paper.

He finished tracing her list with his fingertips and met her eyes.

"Daniel..." She held out her hand to him, a closed fist, and slowly opened her curled fingers to reveal the absence of an answer to the question he was asking. Taking what wasn't there, he shoved it into his pocket, knowing he would have it tattooed onto his arm later, to carry with him always. She watched him walk out the door wondering what he'd taken, but wondering even more what she had given.

When she left, the reasons had been solid, steady, like a door she'd pushed through. But somehow she couldn't remember its color or shape, and she couldn't stop wondering if she ever really knew.

A Poor Woman's Penelopiad

Elisira Auchter, Junior

And just like that, he falls asleep. I want to let him sleep, but oh, such questions in my mind.

"Odysseus?" I whisper, barely making a sound.

He doesn't move. I suppose it's just as well. Bless him, he's such a bother when he's grouchy and hasn't had his eight hours. I gaze at him fondly, letting the love wash over me.

And yet...

And yet, something holds me back from feeling that pure love. I can't place it. Anger? Discomfort? Tiredness? Wise Athena, help me find the word. There it is. Doubt.

This wasn't supposed to happen. This was not part of the plan. He was supposed to return. He was supposed to fix everything. He was supposed to make everything perfect again.

And yet...

And yet, I don't think that everything is perfect. No, Penelope. Be assertive. See if it actually works this time. Everything isn't perfect. Odysseus killed those horrible men. I wasn't keen on him disposing of those maids, but I have to trust his judgment. Right? That's what a wife does. No, it's not. I'm only saying that to mask my guilt. I don't trust his judgment. That's why I'm trying to wake him up from his well-deserved sleep. Dammit, be assertive, Penelope.

Odysseus slept with another woman. No, Odysseus slept with many other women. I pined for him for so long, never indulging in anything other than tears. Mourning. That's what I did. Whenever I tried to address the horrible men, they laughed at me. A woman, trying to be direct. Ha. They would have had me if I had so much as given a nod in their direction, only to run to the other men and tell them of my loose morals. My loose morals. After they had slept with every slut in Ithaca.

This isn't right. I am loyal, yet Odysseus is "being a man." He said that he only did it because it got him what he wanted. He didn't apologize. He didn't bother to talk about it more than a couple of minutes. If it's not a big deal, why am I worrying about it now?

And yet...

And yet, I can't help being bothered by all of this. Were they smarter than I am? Did he like them more? Was he disappointed in this evening? Was he expecting more? Did he like that they were so assertive? Why does this bother me so much? I bet they dressed nicer,

didn't they? Sluts, bitches, all of them. I hate them. Terror pierces its way into the doubt. What if I start hating him for it?

I can't control myself. I turn to him, nestled peacefully in the bed he built. The bed he built for us.

"Odysseus?" I whisper again, my voice raspy from holding back tears.

A pause. A slight movement. His eye opens slightly.

"Mmm?"

"Were...were the others prettier than I am?"



Figure Study, oil on canvas
Elizabeth Erickson, Senior

The Head and the Heart

While I wait for sleep to come
some nights as I lie awake,
I listen to the arguments
my heart and mind can make.

One argues you are gone now,
love can't return to life.
It turns to numbers and science,
assuming logic will end the fight.

The other softly repeats to me
what it knows I'd like to hear--
be patient, and in all good time,
your friend will be back near.

If it was that important,
there would have been a way by now.
It's just too much for you to carry,
you may as well let go.

But I can't walk away!
My very soul lies in those hands!
And as long as time shall carry on,
my hope, then too, shall stand.

They all say that it's over,
it's insane to keep the faith;
if you would just move on, you'd see
this isn't worth the wait.

I know this road's been long,
but this I know that this is true:
I cherish this friendship greatly enough
to walk on, to carry through.

You think you are invincible,
you think that you are tough.
But what if in the end, you're wrong?
What if love is not enough?

Fatigue wears on my body
and my eyelids start to droop,
the altercation quiets down
but never will be mute.

Come daylight with the morning,
I will listen once again
as my head and heart dispute the love
of a once and forever friend.

- Jessie McCormick, Junior

Location of the Absence

If right is wrong
and wrong is left,
then which way shall
we go?
The lines are crooked,
our vision is skewed,
and the flame is losing
its glow.

If we turn left
and think it's right,
then wrong is all
we know.
When the right
is left behind,
the wrong continues
to grow.

Unfocused eyes,
trembling hands,
uncertainty controls
our feet.
We're going to the somewhere
that leads to the nowhere
at the beginning of a
dead-end street.
Our nodding heads
and swaying hips
try so hard to grasp
the beat.
Our feet stumble
as we search
for the torn and
overstuffed seat.

If right is wrong
and wrong is left,
then which way shall
we turn?
If we wander
into nowhere,
then what's
the lesson learned?
Comprehension
and clarity
are two things
we long for and yearn.
But we fear the flame
because if it's too strong,
it will cause everything
to burn.

- *Raven Tolliver, Junior*



The Hanged Man, gouache on photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

Green Lantern Shoes

Ken Logan, Senior

I once knew this kid from the neighborhood I grew up in—a place of decrepit streets and a hard upbringing. It was a place where luck was hard to find, if you ever found it all. Everyone who lived there knew it, even the kid.

His father dealt with it the only way he knew how to—the same way that his own father, the kid's grandpa, did: he worked hard at his dead-end job, provided what he could to his family, and spent his free time drinking, hiding from his bleak existence in the bottom of a bottle. The kid told me once what it was like. He told me what his father said was the best piece of advice you could ever give anyone:

"Life's a bitch and then you die...but before you go, you gotta struggle through it. That's when you'll pick up the bottle. Not because it helps you cope, but because you hope that when you wake up from the blackout, the brain cells that died were the ones that held all your regrets and bad memories."

The kid had his own way of dealing with the hard knock life. He was a comic book junkie and lost himself in the battles of heroes and villains. The good guys were either born for it or rose to it—from the depths of down-and-out just like him and his dad. Just like everyone in our neighborhood.

I got out of there and I knew how the kid felt. For me, it took hard work, perseverance, and whatever luck I had going for me. I took the kid under my wing and asked him how he was going to do it—how he was going to get out and make his life his own. He surprised me with what he said:

"I don't know. I don't know if I even want to leave. Too many people need help. I might stay. This place needs a hero. Like Green Lantern...but he has the entire galaxy to watch. People stealing and beating up the weak aren't important enough for him. So when I grow up, I'll watch over this place. Anyone can be a hero, just look at the Green Lantern Corps. It's full of aliens from all over the universe. Even the ones from Earth were all different—some were white, some black, and all of 'em did different stuff before they got into the Corps."



Blue Self-Portrait, blue ink on paper
David Besteman, BFA Senior

The kid made me smile. That was some deep mojo from a kid who was barely 12. Then again, all he did was read—and all he read was comic books with champions of justice.

I didn't have help when I got out. I didn't have a sense of justice, either—I only cared about myself and what I could do to help me. The kid sparked something inside and I had to do something for him. I asked him what size shoe he wore. He got hesitant but told me. When he asked why, I told him to wait until tomorrow.

When I saw him again, I handed him a Converse box. It had a pair of special edition Green Lantern All Stars inside. It blew his mind. He rushed to put them on and stared in amazement at them.

"These are so awesome! I love 'em! Thank you!" he roared in delight before becoming somber.

"What's the matter?" I asked him.

"Why...why did you get me these? We're not family or anything...just from the same neighborhood."

"You're gonna be hero someday, right? It's gonna be tough—prolly the hardest thing you'll ever do. There'll be times that you'll feel helpless. Like a bully being bigger than you when you try to stop them from picking on someone. Or when you have to tell an adult about someone doing something bad—maybe even another adult. When those times come—and they will, believe me—you're going to hang your head and wonder what to do. When you do, you'll see those shoes and remember that even though the Green Lantern is one of the mightiest heroes, he doesn't have time for our neighborhood. But you do. You said you were gonna be this place's hero. I never felt like that until I talked to you, so here's my contribution to help you out."

This was all years ago, but the kid kept his promise. He was in the papers every other week from his efforts to help out our neighborhood. I got a letter from him just last week, telling me that he was entering the police academy and planned on getting assigned to our neighborhood when he graduated. All he left at the bottom was this:

"Thanks for the shoes. You gave me the conviction I needed to see this through. You're my hero."

I'm no hero; never was. I never had anyone to look up to. Not until the day I saw that kid wearing his Green Lantern shoes.

The Purple Stained Mug

Anna Egres, Sophomore

Aunt Patty never went anywhere without her coffee mug. She's had the same one for as long as I can remember: it's a faded purple, almost as if it's been through the wash when really all it's been through is years of wear and tear; with little black rectangles in an odd design. The sides of the cup are stained from hot coffee that had streamed down the sides over the years like tears streaming down a cheek. If she washes the mug, the stains haven't come off.

The "coffee black" mug went with her to VG's, a grocery store where she worked the night shift as she left her five kids and got in the van that had never seen the hose of a vacuum. It went with her to the couch when she got home where she would watch television until she passed out. There she'd sleep until it was time to go to work the next night at the place with the fluorescent lights. There she would stock the shelves of the grocery store with items for the next day in oversize clothes that disguised her small frame from the men who worked with her.

She has always been a mother of constant hibernation. She took that coffee mug with her to the doctors where she was diagnosed with an overactive thyroid and told she would need to take medicine. The mug sat in the console of her van when she passed the pharmacy and sped home in attempts to be reacquainted with her pillow once more, never to take the medicine that was prescribed to her.

Whenever she was out with her mug, her bony arthritic fingers adorned with various rings held the handle as if someone was going to rip it out of her grasp. One time, I asked her why she pulls graveyards and sleeps all day and she said, "I have five kids, I'm not going to make the same kind of money I do on the nightshift if I work during the day."

The coffee mug was with her in the house when the kids skipped school because their mother did not take time out of her day to make sure they went. It was with her when they did go to school and they came home with something interesting to say but she was too interested in the images the pillow and the television provided for her over listening to their words. The mug was with her when two of her boys dropped out. It was with her when her boy graduated late and when the other graduated early but never saw college. The purple container was in her hands when her only daughter gave up on school half-way through her senior year.

The mug has now met young blood. A shirtless toddler named Kevin runs about her house and when he is up to it lies down for a nap with her. The woman who pulled graveyards is now a grandmother; her kids are full grown and most are out of the house, so there is no need for the extra money that is earned from the night shift.

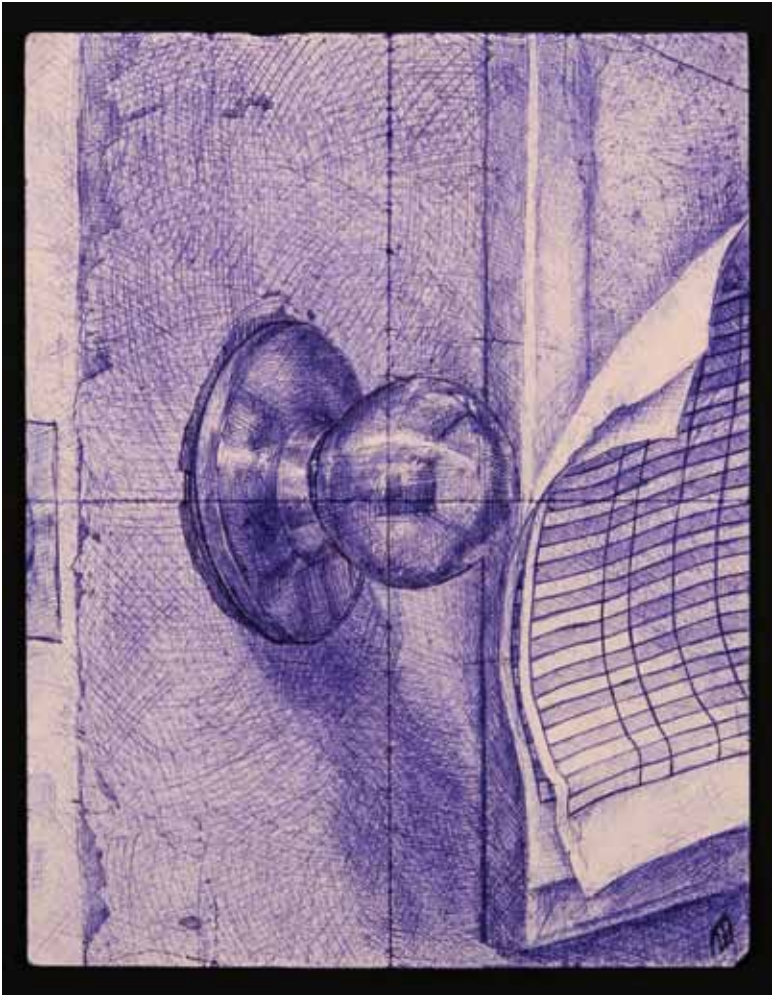
Now, I walk into her house and miss the medicine bottle I should be seeing on the kitchen table. Instead, an oversized, black hooded sweatshirt is draped over

a chair that is pushed up to the table. Although time has passed, the place really hasn't changed much. I ask my cousin,

"Where's Aunt Patty?"

She points to the couch, "She fell asleep watching TV after she got home from work. Kevin tried to wake her up. He was like, 'Grandma, Grandma,' but she won't move."

"I guess, I'll come back later," I say shrugging my shoulders. On my way out, I pass the kitchen; sink full of dishes, dog hair on the floor and pictures on the fridge of neglected kids. I push the door open, look back once more and I see that faded, stained coffee mug and that explains it all.



Blue Doorknob, blue ink on paper
David Besteman, BFA Senior

Late Night at the Pancake House

In the long hours between night and day,
the International House of Pancakes's sign
cut through the silent darkness.
The neon letters in the window
shout "OPEN"
urging the weary driver to come inside.
The diner was once his warm weekday getaway,
a breakfast crowned with butter
and washed down with deep black coffee.
But after that cold afternoon,
in the booth with the view of midday traffic
and the small tear down the left seat,
when she cut his heart like a hotcake,
and pushed leftovers aside,
he never wanted to see that white puffy logo
or eat a flapjack ever again.
He couldn't imagine why his car pulled to the curb
or what moved him through the welcome doors.
He only knew the lights--
hot red and cool blue--in that foggy window
made him want to remember that day
just so he could forget again.
Inside, the busy waitress swayed like her,
the soft background music sang like her,
and the smooth syrup he poured on
his lonely golden short-stack
shimmered slowly like her eyes.

- Erin D. Lilly, Senior



Nick as Buddha, colored pencil on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior

You Were Wearing Red

Beneath your autumn shudders,
right where you want
everything to come out right

nothing ever happens.
Don't
answer the questions you deem
negative and beseeching.

However many times I
organize your
falls, I come back to that night we

fought over which stars were
most
archaic and distinguished.
Never had I felt so loved.

- *Brendan Hoffman, Sophomore*

Ice House

Jenna VanderWeyden, Junior

It was cold that day. Snow and icicles blanketed the exterior of the house, yet old man winter was no match for the blizzard that was my stepmother. She was angry—again. Her shrill voice pierced that of Mary Poppins, shattering my shield of distraction. My veins shivered throughout my body as I curled up on the couch and covered myself with the plush throw blanket. The welcomed warmth lasted only a moment before her biting chill invaded the room. Frost seemed to cloak the coffee table and shelves, my breath turned to crystals, and the entire room went gray with a wintry bleakness. Her stone-cold glare fixed on me, "I hope you don't think you're keeping that blanket. Give it to me." She extended a cool hand, demanding the goods. My ten-year-old eyes were stunned at the harsh sting of her frostbitten expression. In her impatience she snatched the blanket causing a glacial wind that twirled around me. What little heat I had managed escaped into her arctic air and with this cold shoulder beside me I was left chilled—again.

The Return of Fire

He is a flicker of light among the dark.
Brighter still, even among flames.

It's his hair.

I knew of no other red hair that is as brilliant and as beautiful as his.
Like melting copper that has been dipped in cold waters.
Like the glow at the bottom of a gas oven.

Like a bleeding sun.

The touch of a ripe mango's blush.
A tall, red warning.
Just when I thought I would never see him again.

It's his presence.

Like a hot knife on the skin.
He set rooms ablaze.
Air boiled around him.

His name scorched the tongue.

It was like he was back from the dead, even though he never died.
A will of pure ignition.
The man with the burning hair.

He who walks like fire.

But his eyes were like holding glass to the sky.

- Tiffany Fluker, Junior



Self-Portrait, oil on canvas
Thomas Smith, BFA Senior



Broken Reflection, ink on paper
David Besteman, BFA Senior

A Homespun Reprise

Karen Heeringa, Senior

It was a gorgeous evening. Everything about that night was beautiful; I remember the crickets making their repetitive croaks and the moon-made shadows of the trees we walked past. It was cloudless and no one was out on the street except for him and me. It being late at night, the heat didn't make us sweat as much. The cement was still hot as I carried my shoes in one hand and assisted my drunken boyfriend with the other as we walked to our front door.

He wasn't necessarily annoying or mean when he was drunk, just sloppy and repetitive. I kept my words to a minimum because speaking would just encourage him to make loud gestures and say stupid things.

As we made our way up the stairs, he pushed me into the black iron gate alongside me. I cried out in pain and looked down to see my arm bleeding. "Why did you do that? That hurt, and now I'm bleeding" I said in shock. He gave me an unfocused glance and said "What? That isn't anything. I just gave you a playful shove. Stop overreacting."

I suddenly knew I was never going to marry him. Maybe it seems like I was overreacting and that I should wait till morning, after we've talked, to make my decision. Little did I know that my whole life had prepared me to make my sudden decision that night.

I had moved 1,300 miles to be with him in Florida. The funny thing was that he was the one that kept bringing up the subject of marriage: "...well, we can tell that funny story to your parents after we get married" he'd say. Or "that guy you just met is ordained. He can marry us if you'd like."

I was kind of surprised when he first brought it up. It wasn't like I hadn't thought about it already, but I had learned through TV shows and friends that I shouldn't even broach the subject till I was absolutely sure he was on the same page as I. "Girls aren't supposed to be the ones who scare their boyfriends with this kind of stuff," I thought. It seemed so obvious and natural when he brought it up, though, like this was the turn my life was supposed to take and I accepted it easily without hesitation.

I was abused growing up. I had learned quickly that people who abuse others are ones to avoid. Once, my father pinched me so hard that it left a purple, softball-sized bruise on my leg for a month. He would yell at my sisters and me for forgetting to close a closet door in the hallway, or, I wouldn't have my hamburger bun open when he had the cooked hamburger patty ready to place on it, so he struck the table with the metal spatula hard enough to leave deep gashes in the permaboard for years to come. I knew the warning signs of abusers and I wasn't going to make the same mistake my mother had.

So when my boyfriend shoved me into the gate, passionless and oblivious to the blood and the pained expression on my face, I didn't pause: this was not going to happen. My "no B.S." rule counted for everyone, especially those I might spend my life with.

Later, when we discussed the matter, it caused a fight; one he "didn't understand the reasoning behind." I believe that is a statement many alcoholics make: others are always blowing things out of proportions, things weren't that bad, and the worst: "you're just being dramatic." It hurts when I think of the hundreds of times my father said this to my mom when everything was always his fault. These are things that no one should be punished for. Many abused people take these excuses and turn them around on themselves: "Maybe I am being dramatic?" "Things aren't that bad--he said he was sorry and that it won't happen again." But I mentally tattooed this on my brain long ago: don't be a victim.

Consumption

Rachael Steil, Junior

I claw at the frozen cake, scrape at it with a fork as I squat low to the ground in the cold white kitchen, my bare feet chilly against the tile floor. The harsh lights glare at me from above as I sit before the bare refrigerator, my altar. The god I fear and cherish is seated before me in its chilly throne.

It feels as if the walls close in on me as I focus on this white brick, this chunk of sugary bliss that I can't break apart. Who the hell decided to freeze the cake in the first place? At least it will slow down how many calories I take in, I think.

The kitchen is desolate of any pots or pans save for a few butter knives and forks, which I have eagerly obtained from the creaky drawers. The walls are bare; the cabinets are empty. I know this because I checked for other treats before attempting this feat. The cake is the only thing in here; it's me and this cake, my horrible, evil downfall of the warm summer night in Loveland, Colorado.

The hairs of my back are up on end. I dread, anticipate that someone should swing by and catch me in the act—an act I cannot tear myself away from. But everyone is at the main building, or their own homes on campus. I am alone here at 9 p.m., alone with a body that is screaming for sugar, screaming for something to shut up my brain. Get food. Sugar and fat. NOW.

Outside the dark hallways encroach on my new secret ritual; they are empty and devoid of life. But the voice grows with intensity in my mind and travels through the corridors. It is back again, a devil I fear to face each night.

You're fatter than you were last summer.

This eerie demon travels among the ghosts of souls lost to cancer in the drafty hallways. Just because I leave home doesn't mean I've left the voice behind, too. It finds me here at the holistic recovery clinic in Eden Valley. I am here to observe the cancer patients who strive to heal themselves through hot water baths, carrot juice cleanses, and most of all, raw, vegan food. The food. The very thing I came here to learn and observe as a healing alternative for the cancer patients.

But cake is not vegan, and it is definitely not raw. It's my forbidden. The voice, in all its familiarity, has found its strength here in the loneliness I experience—and it calls for this cake. It flows with the draft of the hallway and into this kitchen. It has resided in my mind for two years now, and it's out to play.

You thought you were disciplined? Ha!

But at this point I don't care. I don't think about the future. This ferocious animal does anything in its power to get even the smallest bite of sugar.

You are that animal. That monster.

I had never done this in the past. I maintained such a great sense of control. So much control. Who is scraping at this cake? I don't steal food. What am I doing here?

The metal knife slips and falls to the floor, echoing across the kitchen and into the hall, screaming, "She's done it!" with every earth-shattering clatter. I jump, my heart thumping wildly. I awaken from this trance. I let the refrigerator door fall shut as I grab the fork, slide my foot across the smooth tile floor to remove any crumbs of evidence, and walk swiftly down the dark hallway back to my room. Safe.

Had anyone heard that? Would they notice that the birthday cake was now missing a letter "h"? Fear and embarrassment fills me. Part of it had been eaten already. The party had been celebrated. Would they see through the fluffy white icing into the rage and torment my fingers went through to pry the nibbles of sugary icing, little by little?

I walk into the bathroom, close the door, and drop the utensils into the sink in disgust. I look into my outstretched palms, horror-stricken. This is what it has come to? Stealing food (and someone's birthday cake at that) because I can't control myself?

A binge. Is that what this is? I had been eating all day. I knew I was well over my calorie limit. A failure. And it had come down to this—eating the forbidden. Sugar. Fat. Weight. My latest nightmare is about to come true. I am going to gain the weight I had laboriously worked to get rid of and keep off.

I struggle to turn on the faucet, my hands slippery from the melted frosting. I try to wash my hands, cleanse them from the dark brown chocolate cake crumbs that pepper my hands. I wash the bloody evidence from my body, as if guilty of a murder.

It isn't until my hands are completely rinsed that I look into the mirror, horrified. What have I become?

I still wonder about that night in Colorado, situated deep in the heart of the valley. I wonder if they found the cake in a different state when they pulled it out of the refrigerator. I wonder if they noticed the small, fine grooves of a butter knife etched into the frozen frosting on its right side. I wonder what the birthday recipient would think if they had any idea of what their cake did to me that night, what it fueled in me for the next few years. I wonder if there are microscopic pieces of chocolate cake, leading a trail from the kitchen to my room, to the bathroom where I saw myself in the mirror for the first time.



Detail of *Academia*, charcoal and conté on paper
Elizabeth Maxian, BFA Senior

Confession

I think I'm going to

Upchuck

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

But I don't, and I have not done so yet

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

Am I going cry this time, too?

It has been far too long and not long enough since my last Confession.

There's a vast shameful blank space in my mind.

I'm really bad at this.

He must think I'm a terrible person.

I wrote it all down, though.

If I ever start talking it will be

Miraculous.

Start wherever you like—

And I do—stumbling and awkward.

Why do you think you did that?

Because I AM a terrible person.

Do you know why you felt that way?

Why must he be so nice?

Is there anything else?

Everything and nothing and why do I feel so

Petty?

That's all.

Can that possibly be true? Either way, I'd like a big penance, please.

Offer up your next Mass for someone else.

But I want it to hurt.

I absolve you from your sins—

When did my soul become so light?

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

- Monika Stutzman, Sophomore

Child Exploring Aloe

Now I see the secret of making the best person:
it is to grow in the open air and to
eat and sleep with the earth.
Walt Whitman

Take a tender plant,
for example,
and split the leaf
with tender thumb.

Let the juices,
succulent, alive,
find their way
into the swirling ridges
of your print.

Breathe it in,
this bitter creature,
breathe its milky life
so it can grow within you.

Look to the heavens,
raise the broken body
to your bright lips,
and kiss it good-bye,
like you will do
so many times.

- Sarah Branz, Junior



Portrait, mixed media on paper
Elizabeth Erickson, Senior

in america, today i wanted you

in america it is we and we are they and i am them
white lines on the black pavement go on and on
and i am the road, never ending—a conundrum

in america we learn to be cautious, to shake hands, but
never touch, and it is in this that we know the world
this lack of love and life and knowledge and emotion
it is in the handshake that we all fail

if i said to you today that i wanted you to meet me
at the end of the road, would you know where to walk to?
after the trees and the fields and the dying corn stalks
could you find me?

if i said to you today that i wanted out, away from you
and us and them, would you forgive me? would you say
stop and don't go and please no and baby stay
after the lakes and moss and tree roots
would you allow me?

in america it is us and them and i am not a part of that
i am the dirt road and the rocks in it, the rivets and holes
the things left behind in your tire tracks and the dust that
billows up and away

in america it is fast, fast, fast and don't slow down and you
will learn that there is no stopping a road that goes on and on,
across this nation of faces that cannot touch, cannot tell
if there is anything at all or anything at not, and i cannot tell
who you are.

if i said to you today that i wanted you to meet me
behind this tree here, with the knot that is the eye that sees
us all, would you know what i meant? and would you go,
fast, fast, fast and find me
without stopping?

if i said to you today that i wanted you and me and no more
us and them, would you run barefoot to me without stopping?
would you see the lines, so white on such black, and follow
them all the way?
on and on, forever?

- Danielle Alexander, Senior



Skeleton, ink on paper
David Besteman, BFA Senior

Remember, A MoMent

Red shoes (too small) tossed on yellow pineapple you
ate out of the dumpster on barney street where
your dad built **Every** house.

Binky (who scares me) **Even** though she is
your mom and **Calls Cats**: "Here kitty, kitty, kitty!"
more tenderly than to **Anyone** else, even you.

Michael's shiny pennies scatter when debbie dr**O**ps the glass jar
to the ti**Le**—on purpose, **Even**—shattering (both).

fluffy brown bun**Ny's** ear chewed and **Drooled** on
the bed where becky lays (sleeping) **Alone**.

Cat stevens sings **How** can i tell **yO**u i love **yoU**?

stars streak **Midnight** skies in michigan
becky and rudy kiss the other **A**wake.

Loons wail call all three nights—not wolves—so whisper (goodnight)

My! mine! your light—shines fantastic!

after, ac**Q**uiresce to michigan to dream wide awake

but how *can* we be what was never before?

pl**U**ck strings while i sing,

simmer chili—(most) always listen

catch chloë laugh on the sw**I**ng in the yard

tie kri**S**ter's shoes—the big-boy boots—brown leather laces

cradle **T**eresa whenever we need to leave shore

and meet me in bed even after we argue

Never alone, not alone like before.

- *Rebecca Malmquist, Senior*

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Elizabeth Nelson, Sophomore

I used to like the phrase, "out of sight, out of mind." After all, it's meant to be comforting. Like, Don't worry, the baby will stop crying soon after his mother leaves, or No problem, I'll just throw away this embarrassing photo and forget it ever happened. There are still occasions when that old adage comes to mind and makes me feel a little better. But not always. It scares me when my grandmother can't remember who I am, even though I visited her last week. My insides tighten when she calls me by my mother's name. I worry that I'll forget the good things after too much time has passed, just like she did. And then what will be left?

I remember the boy who sat behind me in third grade and pulled my hair. I wanted to forget about him. But I didn't. I remember passing him in the hallway after sixth grade gym class. I remember him carefully cleaning his glasses in the library in eighth grade. I remember him doodling rocket ships in his notebook when we sat next to each other in chemistry class in ninth grade. And I remember the first time he kissed me – the subtle curve of his arm against my back, the sharp angle of his nose close to mine, the curious way my breathing faltered under the gaze of his chestnut-brown eyes. I haven't seen him in ages, but I haven't forgotten. And I'm not sure I want to.

My grandmother looks perplexed when I ask her about the first boy she kissed. Her mouth gets tight and small, and the skin between her eyebrows puckers with concentration. Her eyes are glued to the opposite wall, as if the answer will appear there. She says she thinks it was a good story; she wishes she could tell it to me. But she doesn't remember it exactly. Years of disuse have swept this memory into a hole of forgotten things from which very few ever return. "But he was probably handsome," she says, squinting to read the answer off the pale blue wallpaper. A mischievous smirk sprouts on her face. "And tall...and rich...with a sense of humor...and absolutely smitten with me..." I smile and watch with her as the story unfolds on the wall. Neither of us minds that she doesn't remember. We like this memory better.

For My Grandfather
William Miller
1922-1986

Story says he was

Built from turmoil at sea,
saw friends fall and battleships bombed,
images of burning metal searing through
water to the depth of Hell.

Allies forming plans to spill the
blood of the patriots across the world.
Harbor started it, but we finished.

I know him as

From poverty, fathered seven
raised his strict like his captain raised him.
High school freshmen that've known war
Replaces parental compassion with
Militant rules and routine.

His companions now his children.
Marriage forged in love—sharpened in
livid discussion on their upbringing.

Now he is

in the memories of the seven,
his iron stove heating up a full house—
kitchen busy but clean
giving shows to those who come to see,
witty tongue and pointed mind.

From pictures and stories
I have come to know the man
I have never met.

- Ben DeGarmo, Senior

Roots

Roots latched onto my brain
hooked deep into its crevices.
They were always present.
"She weighs less than you"
watered them for the first time.

Thoughts deepened,
darkened,
trickled down my face,
tightened,
snarled,
wrapped my lips shut
so little food could pass,
so words to articulate fear
could not seep out.

One eye forced shut
unable to see,
to understand
the body that shriveled,
suffocated as roots
became thriving weeds.

And when I ripped the roots,
pulled them from my mouth
and learned to speak at last,
they took revenge,
thirsted for food,
rebelled.

I kept one eye open,
finally aware
finally awake
to witness the nightmare unfold
as three torturous pounds
grew to thirty.

I use my fingers,
pry the roots
from the back of my throat,
watch with satisfaction and disgust
as I rip out the fear,
watch it lurch from my body.

Even as hips grow back,
trunk thickens
arms soften
love-handles appear,
I cannot love this body.

I pretend to be brave;
I keep one eye open,
pretend to be okay
with my reflection.
But I force myself
to watch the nightmare unfold,
to watch the roots suffocate me.

Because the control I once had
was never mine to begin with.

- Rachael Steil, Junior



Michaela, charcoal on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior

Mannequin

Made by man,
a genuine replication,
the idea of perfection,
but the flaws are evident too.
Hands that can't move,
still motion—
eyes that can't blink,
blank vision—
false smile,
leaving human implications.
A plastic Pinocchio,
yearning for emotion
but denied it.
Just another duplication
with no heart, mind,
or identification.
Who is this man?
He sadly watches,
frozen,
cold to the touch,
A puppet,
a monstrous creation,
to be destroyed by creators,
No hope of resurrection.
no grave for mannequins.

- Robert Bennett, Senior



Self Portrait, charcoal on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior



Rose #1, charcoal on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior

abigail

the angular arch
of a spine curling
left right
snapping straight
arms ascend past
shoulders
cheeks
ears

swaying back and forth
branches in the breeze
fingertips languid
there is no force

under pink silk
refined thighs and calves
hold the unbearable weight pushing down
on a single toe

right leg raises, a perfect ninety-degree angle
to be eternally pointed

like silk thrown into the air
she sinks to the floor
arms over thighs
left right
inhale exhale

- Emily Clements, Sophomore

Exposed

Am I the dance
shining in light,
sharing my love
with graceful elegance?

Do my leaps
extend through space,
defy gravity?

Are my turns
perfectly executed
like a musical box
ballerina

forever spinning
to soft piano chimes?

Does the audience
see me,
passions and desires
weaknesses and vices
revealed on stage
under burning spotlights?

Or do I
turn away,
hide behind shadowed curtains
to conceal my secrets?

Will my movements
inspire and evoke
beauty and goodwill?

Or will my black leotard
and sage swirling skirts
mask my intentions?

Who will notice
me
behind frilly tutus with rosy bows
and see a girl
exposed?

- Taryn Streasick, Sophomore



Figure, charcoal on paper
Elizabeth Erickson, Senior

The World Tree

Regan Levitte, Sophomore

There is a tree you can climb to see the world. When you touch the trunk, life gently hums under the sleek, grey bark, and there the pure flicker of simply being in the slim, pointed leaves. There is vigor in the twigs, and that high spirit gets passed onto you as you climb and climb, hand over hand, foot over foot, past bees and birds. The curly branches yawn and arch to the sky, up far over the clouds. You can slip past Death, a bird like a widow, draped in mourning clothes, who reminds you that you are only infinite in spirit. You know that disaster has happened because of this tree. Men and gods have eaten its fruit and have hung from it for days, seeking knowledge. Danger is a requirement to get here. Not only is there the Death-bird in the branches, but curled at the roots is a great Serpent. Despite that, on you go, past the clouds, in the young dawn's eyes. And when you reach the very tip-top, within the spheres of heaven, with the moon, and the sun, and all the stars, you can stop and eat the fruit of the tree of life. Having tasted it, even in all your wisdom, you now can know.

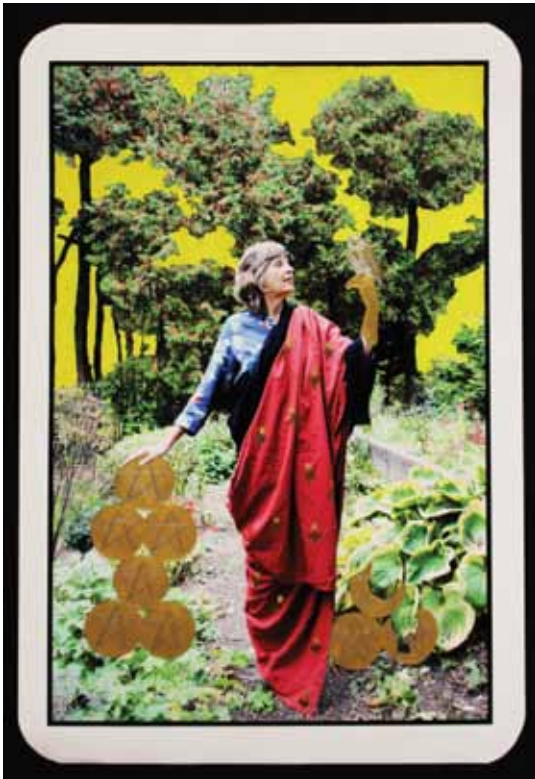


Temperance, gouache on photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

The Call

Monika Stutzman, Sophomore

She had nearly forgotten what it was like to sit and read a book. For so long, her reading had been accompanied by the tense neck of time constraints, the furrowed brow of obligatory analysis, and the uncomfortable garb of places to be. However, today had been different. It wasn't that she had finally found the time or that in reality the same responsibilities were not scrabbling for her hands, her posture, and her time, but this morning she had lost the sense of their importance. The book had sat on her little dorm bookshelf all year. It had sat on her large bookshelf back home for a year before that. It had never been read in all that time. Today, its neglected, used-bookstore pages had wept at her—for her. It was a crying child and she could no longer ignore its pleas. It quieted as she lifted it gently off the shelf and carried it in her arms to the sunny deck. In the sun, the book brightened—laughed—and so did she. Despite the deceptively cool breeze—it was one of those sunny spring days that fooled her into a sundress when she knew better—she sat with the book on her lap, opened its cover and lost herself in its hopeful pages.



The Nine of Pentacles, gouache on photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

Lost

Stephanie Giluk, Junior

Once upon a time, there was a story. It was beautiful and clever and elegant, but it was trapped high in a tower, guarded by a dragon. The fierce knight wanted to rescue the story, certainly, but she kept finding other things to do.

"Looks like my armor needs polishing."

"I should really go practice my swordsmanship for when I decide to kill the dragon."

"Reading another book on dragon lore couldn't hurt. Best to be prepared."

"Every knight needs a good feast before going off to rescue a story in distress, yes?"

And so on.

The story was patient. It sat in its prison and waited, growing always a little leaner, a little more ragged, a little duller as time passed and the knight didn't come. It shed words every day, ink falling on the tower's cold floor as brittle specks of paper drifted through the barred window to fall like ash on the dragon's head.

After a time, the knight began to grow listless, her armor weighing on her like the pull of a forgotten dream. She was losing something precious, and she needed to save it before it vanished. The knight summoned her courage, prepared her most trusted steed, and rode to claim her story.

The tower was not as dark and forbidding as the knight had imagined, and the dragon was neither as large nor as fierce as she had worried it would be. After only moments of battle, the knight struck the dragon's scaly underbelly with her sword and the bloody creature fled, spiraling away into the red sky.

After bursting through the rusty iron gates and climbing the endless labyrinth of stairs, the knight reached the top of the tower. The story, torn and crumpled, was there still waiting, as the knight knew it would be. The knight knelt, ashamed it had taken her so long to come for her story, ashamed she had almost let it die. The story, though, was ever one to forgive, and bade the knight listen, and the story went a little like this:

Once upon a time, there was a knight who wandered, a woman who wanted, a boy who tricked, a flower that poisoned, a jewel that enslaved, a sword that healed, a story that had finally been spoken.

The Watch

I sit in firelight with my watch,
the constant ticking of the steel
rotating quickly past the hour hand.
And as every second leaves,
I silently whisper a prayer, "No."
But the clock will continue

along with the way I continue
to count the seconds on my watch,
since the moment she told me, "No
more," and I feel something steel
cold on my heart, but the knife leaves,
clenched in the vice of her hand.

I cover the wound with my hand,
remembering I have to continue
on through the rain and falling leaves,
the only time kept is on my watch.
I feel the polished, unstained steel
in my palm, and think that no

one would let me know
where I could wash blood from my hand,
or just a place from where I could steal
a bit more time. I could continue
counting the moments and watch
her from a distance, but she leaves

to find warmer sands, leaves
without thinking to let me know
why she gave me a small watch
that runs too slow. The hour hand
is just a stump that will continue
its constant circles that steal

the stainless integrity of my steel
clock. With all of the leaves
on the ground, I will continue
with my search until I know
that somewhere is another hand
that will fit the face of the watch.

I'll continue to never know
why not steel, but gilded leaves
grace the hands of that timeless watch.

- Neal Steichen, Junior



Untitled, acrylic, charcoal, ink wash on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior

Selling Grandmother

The diva's hands reach upward in a luxuriant stretch, strange brassy cat in the sun.

On a Fall day & sunny & blue skied & catalpa tree beans & lusty breezes & picked through crates & scent of barns & farmer's perfume & gasoline motors & age.

A droning beehive of hat brims bob with the rhythm as the Westminster chime betrays noon.

She stands poised like a soldierly sentinel & polished & dark & rich & luscious, beautiful brown woman receiving her cue.

Oh how she labors & moves & creaks & sighs & beguiles as she maneuvers through her swan song.

The hum of the auctioneer as he begins his silent call & response like the congregation in hymnal at her funeral-this flock of overalls & sunburned faces & country smiles.

This pastoral playing out as the crescendo rises simultaneous to the chimes, each low long last mournful tone announcing the passing of time & leaving no question for whom this bell tolls.

This layering of sound, the heartbeat of life & an era end all swept up in a tapestry woven of the moment to be recalled & reflected later.

Her aria ends, her fate unclear, as her new owner steps forward to embrace her seller and receive her new guest.

The sea of hats is parted, and the heads bow their deference: It was the command performance of a lifetime.

- Debra Duiven, Senior



Woman Sheep Overlay, photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

My argument with grapefruit

My main argument with grapefruit
is that it demands the whole of my attention.
No matter how I eat it
I cannot read or write or type.

My only concern is that
grapefruit
with its pink flesh
fiery to the eye and
tart to the tongue,
juice that squirts and stings
when the spoon strikes at the wrong angle
or my nail punctures its flesh.
I want to be that grapefruit:
fiery and tart and delicious.
I want to command attention
the quiet, subtle way a grapefruit does,
so that you don't even notice
having put your book down
to consume me.

- Aimee Shemanski, Senior

The Old Man and His Bag Lady

Anna Matthews, Senior

The woman threw gold fairy dust into the air at the edge of the pond. The man stood nearby, arms clasped behind, and watched it explode out of her hands and shimmer soundlessly down to the water. No—the woman threw handful after handful of breadcrumbs into the water from the two plastic grocery store bags she carried. Each toss ended with her arms outstretched to the very fingertips until all the gold fell, and she began again. I watched sleepily.

Fall clarifies the atmosphere here in the North. Today is a “Best of...” day, cornflower sky and poplar leaves turning yellow, maples streaking, about a couple of weeks before acorns start conking pedestrians. I wanted to read outside—it was warm in the sun—so around noon I went to the park of two sloping lawns, one from a parking lot and the other from a busy road, that meet in a man-made pond. The pond seems sourceless to the east, where the water emerges to flow slowly under the few looming willows and through the pipe below the path that cinches the pond into an 8, and ends to the west in a small waterfall—or after this year’s dry summer, a dam—with a slup slup into a shallow creek bordered by a copse of trees, my favorite spot.

I was reading there, in my spot, lying on an old sheet with a straw hat for my eyes, when I smelled a cigarette disposal bin. Odd, when the closest one was downwind in the parking lot. Ugh. A twig from a tree swiped my face. When I raised my head to brush it away, I noticed the two figures paused near a small tree on the opposite bank of the pond. I had thought I was alone in the park.

The woman smoked a cigarette and cast her little spell again, crumbs into water. Her hair swung long, black, in a ponytail down past her shirtail. She wore dark patterned leggings, a loud patchy jacket, and a t-shirt and sweater fell below it. Her neck made a small stoop of her back—she might be 60. On her head sat a wide-brimmed, black hat. All her clothes were too large, and incongruous with the man beside her: khakis, light green oxford tucked in, leather belt and shoes. His thinnish gray hair shifted easily in the wind; he hadn’t combed it down as his clothes led me to expect. Their faces were shaded by the tree.

I hadn’t noticed the cigarette between the woman’s lips at first. She inhaled, drawing my focus. She and it together smelled dull, rain sodden, just like the bins’ smell, more of an air mass than a single stream of tobacco. “I could wipe that smell away,” I thought. It’s thick, like the cigar residue that got all over my fingers when I sorted through my great uncle’s house after his death. You don’t expect to smell someone from so far away. It’s a funny breach of intimacy, more so when, by all appearances, this is the kind of woman to whom no-one gets close enough to smell. “To be taken in at distances only” her label would read, but smoke’s not safe even at a distance. The woman treaded back and forth by the small tree, her stolid partner. The man watched her, not really with her. We all sent short midday shadows onto the grass. They never noticed me, even though I stared. I saw no ducks to feed.

Ducks are the only reason to toss bread here. Fish always swim away from shadows, too used to neighborhood boys casting dad's dusty fishing pole.

I know what it is—the woman needs to be made good, acknowledged, given gratitude, even if only by some scavenging, greedy mallard. "Go try the lake at the end of the street!" I wanted to tell them. Instead I told the pond, "It's not your fault." They left, heading up the slope to the street.



Queen of Cups, gouache on photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

Breaking and Entering

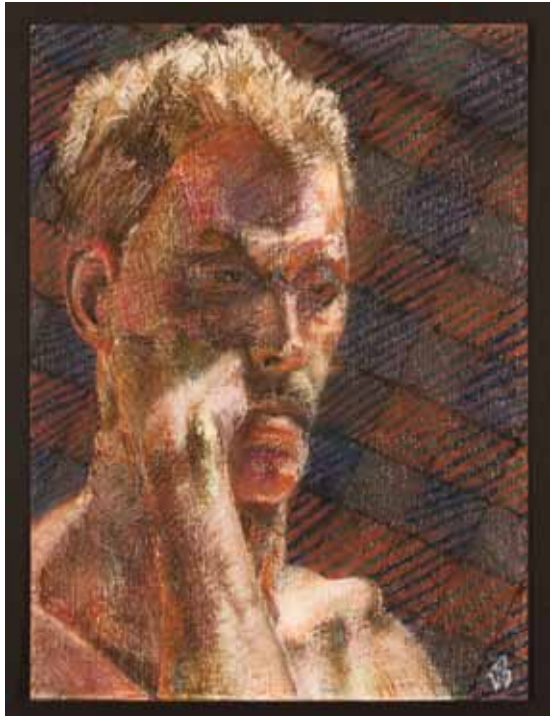
Danielle Alexander, Senior

I dream on my ride to work how the rush of the wind would thrill me. I imagine the sounds of cars and footsteps rush distantly, but I am quiet and still. I must focus to use the laser cutter on the glass; one false move and I could notify those below that I am above, silent like the moon, but more predatory. I carefully apply the suction cup handles and lift the small, round hole I have cut just slightly bigger than the circumference of my waist.

At my actual desk, I fingertip the keys at a speed that often makes my coworkers look up from the phone, wondering how on earth my fingers have not yet caught fire. I answer the phone with a curt and polite "Hi, this is Danielle" and problem solve and direct and give credit card numbers. I type my boss' husband's board report, though no matter how hard I try I cannot find this line item in my job description. I am, in all ways, a perfect administrative assistant. I assist in all things, efficiently and perfectly. There is a saying in my office place when something is done right, or beyond right, that it has a "Danielle touch."

I dream that I rappel silently down into the darkness, my body tenses for sudden movements or noises from the guards, but all is calm, and my feet tap the floor with a sense of absolution and surety. With only two security guards patrolling and five floors to cover, the fifth floor is often neglected. Yet, it is here that one can find the most superb art, the art that is no longer "current" or "in vogue." Centuries of abandoned paintings, pottery, sculpture, and jewelry stacked one atop another rest in crates that form disparate mountains of lost favor. I finger the plastic wrap that shelters these relics from dust and wonder if anyone will find me here. How long could I stay here without disturbance? Weeks?

I once took two weeks off from work, during my five year span of



Plaid, pastel on photograph
David Besteman, BFA Senior

perfection and efficiency. I came back to find my desk piled with ten-high stacks of books, pamphlets, and folders. On top, a note said: "Please organize." So I did. During the time I was gone, the roof found it convenient to leak, and so many of the books were ruined, but curiously no one noticed the leaking. Curiously, no one looked at my desk, not once, not even when they were stacking piles and piles of books and pamphlets and folders on top of it.

The rattling of keys jostles me from my musings and I contrive to become a shadow as the security guard opens the double doors to this lost room and shines his flashlight amid the stacks. Has he heard me? I fear that a silent, internal alarm has sounded at the cutting of the glass, or from my footfalls on the roof. I wait one long agonizing minute, not daring to breathe. Finally, my research into the building's blueprints proves to be accurate; the guard shuts the doors and jingles his keys as he locks them once more, clueless to the perpetrator that lies in hiding.

"Danielle, is that homework or real work?" "Did you register Chrissy for that conference? You know the one?" "Can you get me Pentel pens, size seven, and a red, leather planner the next time you are at the store?" "Did you order my planner online? Why not?" "Can you create a flyer for this thing?" "Help Ron put together a report on transportation costs." "Did you really work until 5:30?" "I need you to decorate this Christmas tree for my kids' school project." "I don't think you need to work any hours over Christmas break." "Why didn't you do payroll over Christmas break?"

Breaking and entering in a public museum is a felony offense in Michigan, punishable by up to ten years in prison. And that's if you don't actually take anything; stealing a piece of artwork is a different manner entirely, and one that I am not particularly interested in.

In the scenario I replay continuously in my mind as I drive to work each day, I enter the museum stealthily – spy fashion. I trick the guards into eating tranquilizer-infused donuts (because I can't imagine pointing a gun at someone and actually pulling the trigger). I cut the electricity to the building so that I am stuck inside, and no one else can come in.

In the darkness that ensues, the haze of the moonlight is added to by the gleaming, frantic bounce of headlights from the street outside. The lights dance across the speckled and pocked oil paintings, allowing them a more mysterious and smooth-faced air of sophistication. The moon glints playfully against busts of pre-Civil War politicians and Incan warlords, allowing them to relive the glory of a midnight battle fought a lifetime ago. Centuries old jewelry, wrenched from its quiet, comfortable home in dark dirt ruins all over the world can finally rest its eyes, made tired by the ever-present glow of a fluorescent lamp, demanding them to be beautiful. There is no one in the museum but me, and I demand nothing but the right to look quietly, without forming judgments. There are no commanding middle-aged persons in business suits at the museum at this time of night, pointing their fingers at a Warhol, explaining it to you. There are no good-hearted, ignorantly insistent young people to exclaim the attributes of manga and graphic design in

the face of Rembrandt and Van Gogh. There is no boss here to tell you with good intentions that you look nicer when you actually brush your hair.

I sit still.

And with an explosion audible only to my ears, I break into and enter the divine world of quiet and sincerity. My fingertips catch fire not from typing, but from the frantic velocity at which my ecstatic blood courses from having nothing to do but race through my body and back to my heart; my heart, which beats a slow and steady rhythm for once in its life. I do not fear getting caught; I fear ever leaving this feeling of absolution and clarity, of artistic forces swelling in a magnitude around me, urging me to create instead of crunch time. I am one with every Rauschenberg collage, enveloped in its layers of complexity and color. I am one with every e.e. cummings poem ever written, every one of its words. I am one with art and literature, with quiet and complexity, with renewal and passion.

I sit still and yet I swirl, a cacophony of freed emotions and frantic lines of text.

1/19/13



Untitled 4, ceramic
Courtney Vander Lugt, Senior

I Am Copper Harbor

I am Copper Harbor,
the chestnut crest of Keweenaw
where Highway 41 turns two-track, turns hoof prints
before Mary McDonald Preserves
Lake Superior shore.

Wisconsin, laments me still—his lover long lost.
I belong to brother Michigan—a mere consolation prize—
rewarded when brilliant Toledo fell into cousin Ohio's arms.
Michigan never even noticed me until
Ohio's lady was lackluster and long faded.
Only then did he see my natural beauty—corruptible profit.

But try as Michigan might to beg pardon
for the minimization,
I will never leave my first love.
He can pave my parts and draw bogus borders between my lover and me,
But Wisconsin and my babies, our Black Bear and Ruby-throated Hummingbird,
Love children conjugate his brown eyes and my auburn hair,
still make the trek between Apostle's Island and Mary like nothing has changed;
the way they always did.

Michigan can be the first in the nation to hoard hennaed ore,
and attempt to industrialize my untamable mane,
even teach his brothers how to milk their own wives for pennies!
but I still save my honey just for you.
Copper floats to Chequamegon—wild and free.

Michigan always wanting what he cannot have—exotic sandy stretches up to blue
eyes ahead
"loves" me and leaves me, insecure and ugly.
But my warrior Wisconsin loves me just the way I am
Uncultivated—precious!
my pebble beaches fragrant with Smooth Rose and Ox-eyed Daisies; only for you
do my Buttercups bloom and do I call for our Northern Flicker. Return
to Brockway Mountain, stargaze under the Aurora Borealis;
my Thimbleberries hang heavy—brimming and bursting only for you.

- Rebecca Malmquist, Senior

Untitled #1

From under my black-painted fingernail I pick grains of sand,
Where an hour ago I wrote our names in a heart on the beach.
I daydream about the day when that same finger will touch your hand—
As for now, your mysteriously familiar face is just beyond reach.
What is the exact shade of your grainy, dark brown eyes?
I dream of looking into them when you stand in front of me.
From my list of things in an ideal man, I check the item 'wise';
You may not believe me, but someday you will see.
When I lay in bed in the dark with you on the phone,
Something stirred within me when I caught a glimpse of your pain.
Your subconscious told me that the two of you had never felt so alone
As when the demons tormented you in God's own name.
I flip through my Bible to your verse, hi-lighted there,
And then a few pages over to the one that I chose.
I wonder how our meeting could possibly be so random, so rare
That the name of a man I've never met I would draw beneath my toes.
My sunshine, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I shall find a new one every morning as I also count the days.

- Hannah Fowler, Freshman



Nick, charcoal on paper
Mary Reyna, BFA Senior



Woman Stream Overlay, photograph
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior

Shadows

Shadows are not humble or generous.

They swallow all, encompass all.

They start so small,
then become colossal and defining.

Cackles like fire crackling.

Stones are thrown.

No smile can hide the memory.

It is a nailed ghost,
inescapable and numerous.

Take away the shadow with light, it's still there.

Even after years of exposure.

Film black, and useless.

A lie.

But kept on top of the shelf,
where a vase of flowers has bloomed

Dusting, decaying, staining, remaining.

Hiding in shadows until I recall it is there.

I regard it with tired eyes.

I can't throw it away,
its musk masks the smell of the lilies.

- Elizabeth Erickson, Senior

There Are Two Kinds of People

There are two kinds of people in this world:

The kind of people who say that there are two kinds of people in this world
And the kind that don't:
I'm the former

There are two kinds of people:
The kind of people that don't say "former" when talking about something that comes before something else
And those that do:
I'm the latter

There are two kinds of latters in this world:
There's the kind of latter that's meant to denote something that comes after some other thing
And the kind that you climb when you can't pronounce D's
I can pronounce D's:
I'm the former

There are two kinds of poets in this world:
The kind that engage in shameless meta-poetry molding texts into some shameless deconstructive gold-mine for an over-eager intelligentsia to pick apart because they didn't get the crossword today,
And those that don't,
I'm the

There are two kinds of people in this world:

- *Stephen Douglas Wright, Senior*

"Green" with pride

I'm so green, so, very, very, green...

I'm a tree hugger, a nature lover, and a believer in God as mother.

I vote democratic. I shop only organic,

I make sure the chicken is "free range" and the lettuce: romaine.

I like granola, yoga, Patagonia,

the North Face, "No waste", and the way kale tastes.

I've climbed Mt. McKinley and enjoy ultimate Frisbee.

My scent is the soil and my car runs on vegetable oil.

I renew.

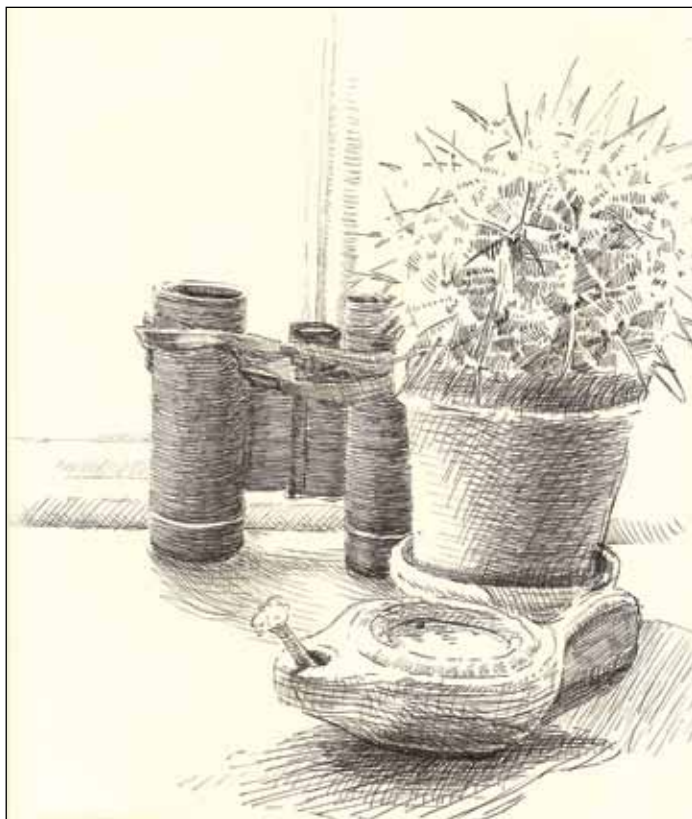
I re-use.

I recycle.

I ride a single speed bicycle.

Because... I'm so green, so, very, very, green.

- Benjamin Stoner, Junior



Cactus Still, pen and ink on paper

Elizabeth Maxian, BFA Senior



Moose Cafe 1, pen and ink on paper
Elizabeth Maxian, BFA Senior

A good espresso

So I'm sitting outside a little café
that desperately wants to be European
drinking burnt espresso
watching clouds and
half hoping to catch a glimpse
of your patchy beard
among the passersby.
It's the kind of
(pretentious)
place you would like
with dark shadows inside
rickety tables
wifi
and deep colors that
lend it an air of the old world
for those who have never been.
I think I prefer
my little café in France

that tries so very hard
to be a bit rock-a-billy but falls short
with its brightly lit terrace
good espresso
and mundane conversation
about grades
and the German next door
—even if the only poet
is the tattooed server
who scribbles verses at the bar
and once winked at me in the street.
So I'm kicking myself
for sitting here on the sunny terrace
alone
because everyone else is inside
in the shadows and air-conditioning
drinking their fair-trade coffee
and burnt espresso
looking for no one in particular

- Aimee Shemanski, Senior

Crush

I like the way the world looks between the last leaf and the first snow,
standing there naked with no make-up on
Why is she so embarrassed?
Blushing pink and yellow, quickly turning out the lights
But I would too if all my friends flew south at the sight of me
All the little humans piling on layer after layer
"Don't touch me!" you say
"Your hands are freezing," you say
But I appreciate nature's honesty,
and I love the cold,
and I'd tell her all this but I'm afraid of rejection.
Maybe one day when I'm dead
and the world has no choice but to tuck me in
and kiss me goodnight.

- Josh Veal, Senior



Grate, Just Grate, monotype
Elizabeth Erickson, Senior

P.O.F.

Carly Plank, Senior

You remember the day you found out. You were seventeen. You felt nothing, really. Nothing except the cold metal and gel against your bare abdomen, and the woman's words "they're not here," falling on your face as gently as the winter sunlight streaming through hospital windows. Then a man's voice, the doctor's voice, refuted hers. "They're there, see? Just extremely reduced. Shriveled." He pointed at the screen, and you looked for the first time. One of the two bright ovals they were discussing appeared faintly, like a clenched fist in shadows with white knuckles protruding from the remainder of the gray hand, or else the petals of a faraway daisy in a black and white photograph. You felt outside yourself. Lately, you've been wondering: what were the chances? You are back.

~~~~

They take you to a small office room adjacent to the hallway that leads to the labyrinth contained within hospital walls. Your mother is waiting there, along with a box of tissues on the desk. You sit next to her, wondering what this means. The doctor enters after you, closing the door as effortlessly as an office door can be closed. He sits down on the other side of the desk and pauses as the corners of his eyes pull closer to the edges of his clear-rimmed bifocals and his lips are swallowed up in a pastel line. He tells your mother what you already know: "Based on what we've found, she has a condition called premature ovarian failure. What that means is it's unlikely she'll ever be able to conceive." Your mother begins to cry, and he offers her a tissue. You think about how you never wanted kids anyway, and you tell her this, thinking she is feeling sorry for you. She probably is, but you know she's feeling sorry for herself too, and perhaps even guilty. And now you feel like an inconsiderate failure-- like a child again.

~~~~

Your life doesn't change, except for the ripe silence following a relative's words, "When you have kids..." before you say you don't want any, and your mom is there. You are thankful she never says you can't have any. There is that, along with the slight annoyance of having to take estrogen and progesterone replacement pills according to the strict weekly schedule you never write down and pretend to forget. Of course you've tried it, but they said it would make you get your period and it never did. You can never have children anyways, and your bones won't be weak if you keep drinking milk. Right? You schedule a bone density test just for confirmation, and your bones are plenty dense.

~~~~

Four years later, you babysit your cousin's two little girls again, and the sun sets early because it's winter. You ask them if they'd like to walk down the street to visit their parents at the holiday festival. They say no, they don't want to see their parents tonight because they missed you. Instead, you play in the backyard lit by flashlights. You run in circles, push them on the swing (they take turns), and the

oldest one says, "I've never been on the swing in the dark before, it's kinda cool," and you know she picked up the word "cool" from you, even though you try to avoid using words from middle school. When you're all breathing hard from running and swinging, you lie in the frigid grass below the stars, three in a row. You, in the middle, tell them to be quiet and listen. You note how the air is quieter than summer, and they agree with enthusiastic whispers. You ask them what they hear. The youngest hears cars. The oldest hears a heartbeat.



**Figure**, charcoal and acrylic on paper  
David Besteman, BFA Senior

## The Middle

I am from the middle class,  
from the Middle West.

I was born locked in the buckle of the Bible's belt.

I made my bed on polished oak and crossed state lines to chase the Holy Ghost.

I am from hands held high and voices raised:

Yes amen, Yes oh Lord!

Yes sir and Yes more please.

I was raised on a broke down dairy farm

at the forests edge,

and so I crafted homes from sticks and stones,

fell from heights but never broke a bone.

I am the middle child, the middleman, born a balancing act:

my father's son and my mother's boy.

I am the artist, and the dreamer; I have my eyes on the heavens

and still a prayer in my heart.

- Benjamin Stoner, Junior



Untitled 2, Ceramic  
Courtney Vander Lugt, Senior

## Vanilla Clouds

Swirling vanilla clouds encircle me  
As I watch this nascent world accede,  
It moves, pursuing greater mysteries  
Springing up and forth, a sky seeking seed,

So shall we mourn the passing of the day?  
Spill tears and tales of what we may have done?  
Grasp at what Time's light has burned away,  
Longing for the light of a Parhelion?

Now night has set and all the earth grows dark,  
Stretching streams of purple span the skies,  
Twinkling, twittering stars grow stark,  
Usurping space and climbing ever high,  
Will we burn bright and also learn to shine?  
Or lament the loss of sad and wasted time?

- *Stephen Douglas Wright, Senior*

## A Love Poem

I push on my heart,  
feeling the cruel cage of bone  
that keeps it safe. Puddles  
of blood seep in and out through  
a series of rusted sewer pipes,  
next to crude food tubes that transport  
a pulpy green fuel.

Messy slop is absorbed as crimson wine  
makes muscles drunk with oxygen from  
the body's favorite bartender, the heart.  
The patrons of the pub never leave  
the white cage, protected in its silky, pillowed  
nook; they never venture out to play  
with the brain in a game of chess.

- *Neal Steichen, Junior*

## Smells like January

The silver bells loudly protest  
as they're taken down at last.  
Do you hear what I hear?  
It's the sound of Christmas passed.

The weather outside is still frightful,  
and baby, it's cold out there.  
My runny nose is Rudolph-red—  
what a holly, jolly affair.

I saw three ships go sailing out  
while I counted my Christmas hoard.  
Our thoughts return to our silver and gold—  
we've forgotten the birth of our Lord.

I should have asked for two turtle doves,  
but I didn't—I'm so fussy.  
The hippo I wanted is in the attic,  
getting hippopotama-musty.

My two front teeth are poking through,  
too sharp against my tongue.  
Tactlessly, we wreck the halls,  
unhang what has been hung.

Away in a box, our Savior's stuffed,  
his manger collecting dust.  
Oh, Christmas tree in the garbage heap,  
this treatment is unjust.

God rest ye, wise old gentlemen,  
packed underneath the bed,  
with tinsel, wreaths, and ornaments,  
and all my green and red.

Go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus came and then withdrew.  
It's like Christmas held its breath,  
and turned from white to blue.

The slushy snow seeps in my boots  
and takes away my merry.  
the air is sour like stale fruitcake—  
it smells like January.

- Elizabeth Nelson, *Sophomore*



Untitled 3, Ceramic  
Courtney Vander Lugt, Senior

### **Weathered Leather**

Watch the weathered leather collecting dust upon the shelf,  
Pastiche pages of memories that constitute a self,  
Words in whorls that swirl like smoke,  
An image overflows,  
Ink floods forth from both my hands,  
Stigmata of the soul,

I swear it was another life,  
A descent of flaming doves,  
That burn and purge our sins  
With the fires of their love,  
(I swear it was another life  
I held you like a gem,  
The precious piece that crowned my life,  
A breathing diadem,

But the jewel in my possession was never mine to take,  
These doves fled for another shore,  
Left ashes in their wake)

This solemn tome of poetry,  
Sole witness to this loss,  
Collecting dust like low-tide crags,  
Accumulating moss

- *Stephen Douglas Wright, senior*

## Hush

Share your secret with the universe  
and it will safely keep.

Pines lose their needles  
when they grow heavy with your sleep.

Have you ever spoken to a wood thrush  
about why it sings alone?

Pitpitpitpit, he'll reply,  
and carry on his song.

Has Grandfather ever told you  
that he comes from oil and ferns?

He gave them all his secrets,  
which is how the universe learns.

- Sarah Branz, Senior



Woman Trees Overlay, photograph  
Chelsea Lanning, BFA Senior